

From: Tryggvi Larusson
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern.

I'm writing to say that I am deeply worried about the settlement the US Justice Department made in the antitrust case against Microsoft. The settlement does virtually nothing, neither to correct the unfair state of the software market today, nor nothing to punish Microsoft for their un-competitive and illegal actions in the past years in the software and PC industries. The question in this case is on one hand: "What is a monopoly?" - My definition on a monopoly is: " A situation where people have no choice other than to deal with one party on a specific matter" and this is exactly the state in the PC industry regarding Operating Systems today.

The strangle hold Microsoft holds on the market consists mainly of API (Application Programming Interface - the tools developers use to make programs) blocks that prevents other players to enter the Operating System market and therefore to compete on healthy grounds with Microsoft on both the OS and general Applications front.

In my opinion a good way to resurrect the competition on the OS market could be if the government would some how mandate Microsoft to open up some parts of its API's (most specifically Win32/MFC). In this way there could finally be an opportunity for new players to enter the OS market. Up to this day all attempts to enter this market have failed and there are numerous examples (OS/2, BeOS and Linux - which has only gained share in server applications but not on users desktops). The Macintosh platform stays alive although it holds only about 4-5% market share of personal computers. It could be argued that Microsoft keeps the Mac platform barely alive (by giving away versions of its Internet Explorer and Windows Media Player and producing its Office suite etc.) to make its case of monopoly in Operating Systems more controvertible to the antitrust case.

There are already attempts to "reverse engineer" the Windows API's and the one that has come furthest is an open-source project called "Wine" (<http://www.winehq.com>) but that project has still a lot to go. The government could make sure the Windows API's are kept open for some time in cooperation with this project as this project is open-source and therefore accessible to everyone, either commercial vendors or individuals. The government could ensure that Microsoft publishes the API's in question and makes sure there are open implementations (i.e. Wine) that are sufficiently compatible to run most Windows applications. Another way could be to fine Microsoft a considerable amount and use the money to found a non-profit organization that would provide an

open-source implementation compatible with the Windows API's and make users run Windows applications (including Microsoft's own) on other platforms than Windows.

In my opinion it is very important that the US government does something about the situation because if Microsoft's progression continues as it has it could have even more damaging effects for users of information technology in the world. The impending risk is that Microsoft would extend its monopoly from the OS software (as it has already done with Office software) to the Internet and could take control of many commercial services on the Internet and gain access to personal information on every Windows user (this is part of the upcoming .Net, Passport and Hailstorm projects from Microsoft). Users could do little other than participating as almost all other people would continue to use Windows and therefore .Net.

Regards,

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